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ST. JOHN  
EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH  
FORT WAYNE, INDIANA





ST. JOHN EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH  
FORT WAYNE, INDIANA





Pastor F. E. Schoenbohm

## *Foreword*

*In the chronology of God a one hundred year period is as a drop of water in the ocean, but here in time, measured in human history, a century of recorded events is something that men count worthy of detailed attention.*

*It is with a feeling of insignificance and humility that the chronicled events of the first ten decades of St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church of Fort Wayne, Indiana are undertaken. The imperfections and failures of the past so greatly outnumber the human accomplishments that one sometimes feels that there is little worth recording. But for the grace of the Triune God, which was able to convert the foibles of men to divine ends, nothing would have been done deserving of note.*

*May the Head of the Church forgive His erring children where in weakness they failed to advance the Kingdom as it might have been furthered if God's will had never been hindered, and may it please Him to instill into the souls of the present and future generations an ever greater loyalty and zeal to expedite the challenging tasks of Christ's Kingdom.*

*We dedicate this Centennial Booklet to the glory of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, reverently remembering the sacrifices of the founders, the membership now sainted, and the faithful pastors who preached the Gospel of Reconciliation and administered the Sacraments of Christ during the years that St. John Church has been in existence.*

*May each one who is privileged to observe this hundredth birthday do it with a distinct feeling of gratitude for past blessings and with the fervent resolve to become more useful in Christ's Church.*

*We pray that many more precious souls may find the way to eternal life here.*

# History of St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church and School

## 1853

When St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church was organized on October 2, 1853, Fort Wayne was a thriving, fast-growing city of about 4,000 population. The Wabash and Erie Canal, which extended from Toledo to Fort Wayne and on to Lafayette, carried practically all the trade and travel from the east. Industries were encouraged to locate here because of easy accessibility to both markets and sources of supply of raw materials. Because Fort Wayne was the high point of elevation on the canal, it was referred to as the "Summit City".

Construction was begun on the Ohio and Indiana Railroad. With its completion in 1854, Fort Wayne was directly connected with New York by rail. Two years later the railroad was extended to Chicago. This contributed greatly to the importance and rapid growth of Fort Wayne.

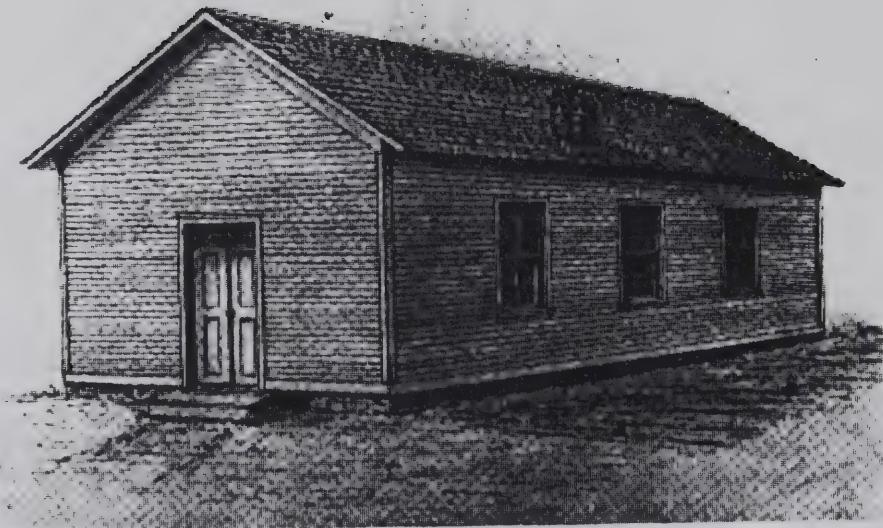
Fort Wayne's first public school was opened in rented rooms in what had been the McJunkin private school building. Plans were drawn and contracts let for the Clay School and the Jefferson School, both of which were completed in 1856.

Fort Wayne boasted two newspapers, *The Laurel Wreath* and the *Times*. The Hamilton National Bank opened in 1853 and the building of the first artificial gas plant was authorized.

The first Allen County fair was held in this year and the first city market was erected on Barr Street between the City Hall and Washington Street.

Most of the city streets were still unimproved although a few were planked. The sidewalks were plank and trees lined the streets of the business section as well as the residential areas.

In this setting one hundred years ago, our hearty pioneer forefathers built the first St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church.



FIRST CHURCH

*This church building was erected in 1853. It was of wood construction 20 x 35 ft. in size and faced Van Buren Street. The benches had no backs and a table served as pulpit. The first organ was a melodian brought over from Germany. This church was sold and moved to 1013-15 Wilt Street where it was converted into twin dwellings.*

These early founders were Bavarians and Wuerstenbergers who, upon coming to Fort Wayne, at first attended St. Paul's Lutheran Church. Speaking a different dialect of German, they did not feel at home among the people of St. Paul's and soon decided to organize a church of their own.

These early founders were George Riethmiller, Heinrich Beck, Michael Ehrman, Michael Baumer, George Kiehaber, John Braun, Michael Mueller, Tobias Hueber, Matthias Strodel, Johann Riedmueller, Michael Kochler, and George Treu. Records indicate that these God-fearing and church-loving forefathers had no money to spend on luxuries, but they always found a little for their church and the work of God's Kingdom.

At the time of the founding of St. John's, Washington and Van Buren Streets were mud. In fact, the new church was practically surrounded by farm lands and woods. In wet weather it was a struggle to get to the church.



PASTOR HOCHSTETTER

The first pastor was the Reverend Christian Hochstetter, who served from August, 1853, to October, 1854. He was also the first teacher of the parish school conducted in the church auditorium.

He was graduated in 1850 from the University of Tuebingen, Germany, and was vicar under his uncle in Koenigen, Germany. On August 11, 1853, he landed in New York after a sailboat crossing from Bremen. About the end of August he arrived in Fort Wayne over the Wabash and Erie Canal and was met by Michael Mueller who made several trips to the canal landing in expectation of his arrival.

#### 1854

The first baptism was held for the infant Matthias Mueller, son of Michael and Barbara Mueller, born on January 21, 1854. He was baptized on January 29, 1854. Godfathers were John Braun and Matthias Strodel.

The first confirmation was on April 3, 1854. Twelve young people from thirteen to nineteen years of age were confirmed. They were Christian Brudi, Joseph Brudi, John G. Hoellein, Carl Rapp, John G. Kopp, John G. Ehrmann, Maria Brudi, Maria Hessenauer, Pauline Unger, Wilhelmine Sauter, Anna M. Koepf, and Elizabeth Kauter.

The first Communion was celebrated on Good Friday, 1854. Fifty-one partook.

The first wedding was held in St. John's on January 15, 1854, when Martin Koehnlein and Rosine Helm were joined in holy matrimony.

The first funeral was that of George August Axler, thirteen months old child of Gottlieb and Marie Axler.



PASTOR KLEINEGEES

In the Spring of 1854, the pastor was sent to a meeting of the Northern District of the Ohio Synod in Bucyrus, Ohio, and the congregation was accepted into Synodical membership.

It was during Reverend Hochstetter's pastorate that the second church lot was purchased for \$411.00, even though \$300.00 was still due on the first.

During this year the first teacher, William Buergers, was engaged. He taught for 6 months and was replaced by J. M. Koch.

### **1857**

The second pastor, the Reverend A. Kleinegees, who served from October 1, 1854, to September 20, 1857, was paid \$200.00 per year. There were fifty-three voting members, the first School Board and the first Sewing Society were formed, and the constitution was revised. Pastor Kleinegees became the first verger because no one else would take the job for twenty dollars per year.

The first parsonage was built where the school now stands. It was a one-story house of frame construction.

St. John was without a pastor from September, 1857 to March, 1858. Rev. A. Herzberger of a neighboring church held services during this time. When he was unable to come, Bible reading services were held. Rev. Herzberger was paid two dollars each Sunday. It cost almost that amount to hire transportation, so it must have been love to God that prompted him to serve St. John.

### **1858**

The third pastor was Rev. Hugo B. Kuhn, who served St. John from March, 1858 to April, 1861. During his pastorate there were sixty voting members. No picture is available of him.

### **1859**

For some unknown reason the congregation severed relations with the Ohio Synod on August 10 of this year.

### **1861**

There were approximately six months (before April, 1861) that St. John was again without a pastor. Rev. Baumann was called from the Pittsburg Synod (General Council) and was installed on April 12, 1861.



PASTOR BAUMANN

The constitution was changed to conform to the Pittsburg Synod on December 30, 1860, and then on March 30, 1861, was ratified by the congregation.

On January 1, Teacher Pueckler's salary was set at \$200.00. On December 5, 1861, the pastor received a salary of \$400.00 plus firewood, which was increased on May 7, 1863, to \$500.00 without firewood. The verger's salary on October 19, 1862, was \$80.00 per year.

On June 26, 1861, the Ladies' Altar Guild was organized. This society made regular contributions to the church and on January 5, 1865, turned over to the congregation over \$300.00.

## 1862

The second church, built in 1861 and dedicated in October, 1862, was of brick construction and measured 50 ft. x 80 ft., and the interior was 28 ft. high. The steeple was of wood construction. The total cost was \$8885.12. A bell placed in



SECOND CHURCH

the steeple was secured for \$244.00, and a new 12-stop organ was purchased at a cost of \$950.00.

#### 1864

On February 14, a cemetery was purchased for the sum of \$800.00. It consisted of five acres which is now part of McCulloch Park.

On September 25, the congregation bought another cemetery of six acres on Maple Avenue for \$133.00 and sold the first. In November of this same year plots were offered for five cents a square foot. Small graves cost one dollar and

a half; large ones cost three dollars. The first grave digger was John C. Braun, who received one dollar and a half for digging a small grave and two dollars for a large one. John Langohr was paid \$18.00 to level and clean up the cemetery grounds.

### 1866

On January 7 of this year the Alms Treasury was inaugurated.

Holy Communion was held four times a year: on Easter, Pentecost, the last Sunday in September, and on Christmas Day.

### 1868

The next pastor, Rev. Johannes Kucher, served St. John from October 25, 1868, until February 18, 1890.



PASTOR KUCHER

There were seventy-one voting members in the congregation in 1868. Rev. Kucher received a salary of seven hundred and twenty dollars per year.



SECOND PARSONAGE

MINER STUDIO.

The second parsonage was purchased on May 23, 1869. This was the lot which is now the church ground to the east. A third lot in between was later purchased in 1873.

The third parsonage was purchased from a Dr. Bruebach and stood on the north-east corner of Washington and Van Buren Streets.

It was remodeled three or four times and served as a parsonage for twenty-nine years in spite of being unsatisfactory. Most of the dissatisfaction seemed to have been due to its eight foot ceilings. Only ceilings of ten feet or more were deemed in those days to be livable.

## 1872

In this year, several wealthy attorneys, who did not want St. John's cemetery adjacent to their properties or perhaps may have wanted to secure possession of the property, made St. John give up the second cemetery, through the civil courts. All the dead were removed and re-interred in the third and present cemetery dedicated in August, 1872. Eight acres were immediately made available for burial. A board fence was put around it, and the congregation built a house on the cemetery land. This house was rented to George Reber, who farmed the remaining thirty acres and who was also the first cemetery caretaker. On November 9, 1879, a society was formed for the protection of the newly-buried, and a watch tower was built from which guards watched nightly for grave robbers.

## 1873

On December 21, the congregation decided they wanted to belong to a nearer Evangelical Lutheran Synod, and on February 15, 1874, joined the Ohio Synod.

On March 24, 1878, it was decided to use the Ohio Synod hymnal, the books costing sixty-five, seventy-five, or eighty-five cents apiece.

## 1877

On March 4, Pastor Kucher informed the congregation that there were Lutherans in Lake Township that needed advice and help in founding a congregation. On June 10, 1877, the congregation agreed to have Rev. Kucher go to Lake Township every other Sunday afternoon to conduct services there. This was the beginning of St. John congregation in Lake Township. The formal organization was undertaken by Rev. Kucher in 1882 with thirteen voting members and thirty-two communicant members. Rev. Kucher served this parish until April 1, 1883, when they called Rev. P. Muellers.

## 1878

On July 14, the congregation decided to observe the silver anniversary on October 6, 1878. George Reithmiller and Nickolaus Jahn, old veterans of the church, made the plans and prepared a history of the past twenty-five years. Rev. G.

Cronenwett of Woodsville, Ohio, was named as guest speaker for the day. Pastor Herbst and his congregation from Sheldon (Yoder) were invited to attend the celebration. The church was decorated with flowers and palms, and in the afternoon the celebration was continued at the Fair Grounds, now known as Swinney Park.

## 1882

The third church included an addition and extensive remodeling. It was dedicated on November 5, 1882. At this time the present three bells were put into the steeple, and an iron ornamental fence was placed around the property.



THIRD CHURCH

## 1887

When the finances became very limited in 1887, Pastor Kucher devised a plan and by 1889 had the church's financial condition in good order. Due to failing health Rev. Kucher found it necessary to resign as pastor, and he left St. John on February 17, 1890.

## 1888

Teacher Philip Scharmann was called as second teacher on April 8.



PASTOR H. P. DANNECKER

## 1890

On May 1, Pastor H. P. Dannecker came from St. John in New Washington, Ohio, in response to a fourth call. He was educated at Capital University, Columbus, Ohio. He was thirty years of age and was installed by Rev. G. F. H. Meiser.

Rev. Dannecker inaugurated English services every other Sunday and later on every Sunday evening. He also started children's mission programs.

On July 3, 1890, the congregation adopted the Ohio Synod's edition of Luther's Small Catechism.

Jacob Stumpf was called as principal of the school and organist. The school now had two teachers and 186 children.

### **1891**

In 1883 a movement was started to found a mission in the eastern part of the city, but it was not until February 15, 1891, that lots were purchased. The school was ready for dedication on September 27, 1891. This was the beginning of Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church to which St. John contributed twenty-one members and \$3200.00 in cash, in addition to the lots on the corner of John and Pontiac Streets.

Rev. Dannecker supplied this new congregation with afternoon services for approximately one year. Pastor T. F. Stellhorn was then called to become Grace's first pastor. Later the congregation changed its location to Anthony Boulevard, where the church, school, and parsonage now stand.

On February 1, 1891, St. John let a contract for a new organ to the Barkhoff Organ Company for \$2400.00. An allowance of \$300.00 was received for the old organ. The new organ had seventeen sets of pipes and later, for the Diamond Jubilee, an oboe and a bassoon stop were added.

On January 4, 1891, the pastor's salary was increased from nine hundred dollars to one thousand dollars per year.

### **1892**

George Motz was elected treasurer, and he was credited with inaugurating an efficient bookkeeping system and with dividing the congregation into 15 districts to facilitate collection of church dues.

### **1894**

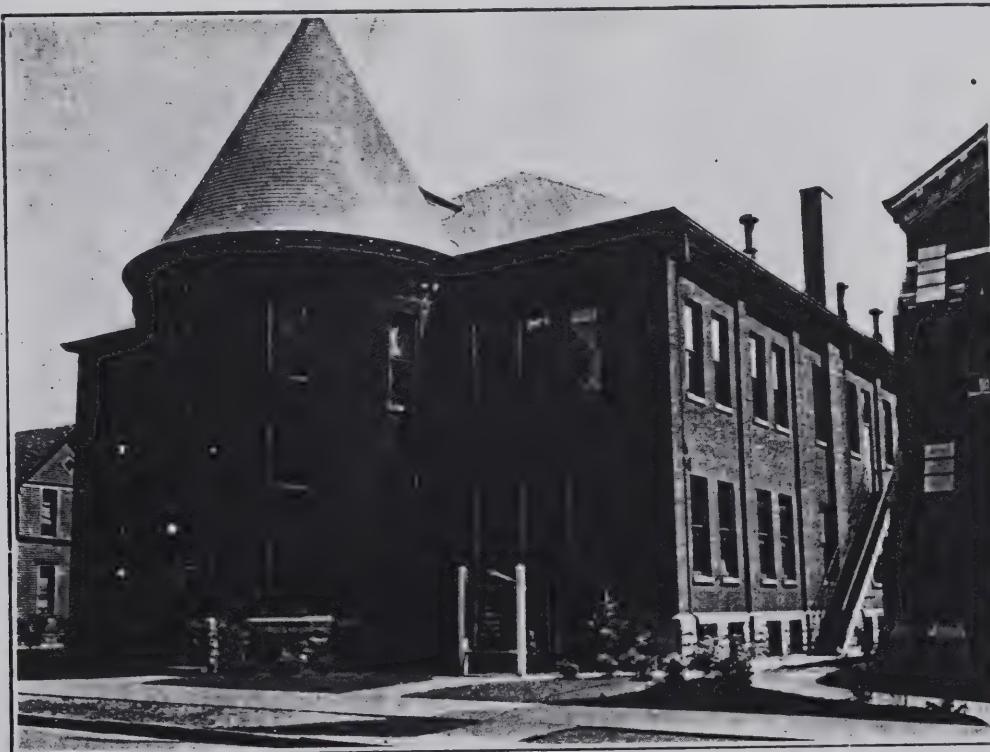
Washington Street was paved with asphalt at a cost of \$1500.00. The church was redecorated for \$700.00.

### **1895**

In March of this year Adolph Oelke of Pomeroy, Ohio, was called as third teacher. The school now had 200 pupils. His salary was \$500.00 per year. At teachers' conventions, held at different times, the three teachers—Stumpf, Scharmann, and Oelke—were referred to as "the three Indians".

### **1897**

On December 5th the present school building, costing approximately \$15,000.00, was dedicated.



SCHOOL

## 1900

In May, Pastor Dannecker had served for ten years. The congregation decided to have a surprise celebration. An evening service was conducted at which Dr. Stellhorn preached to a full church.

## 1902

Three hundred dollars was sent to Columbus, Ohio, for buildings of Capital University. One hundred dollars of this was used for a bell to be placed in one of the buildings. The bell bears the inscription—"This bell is a gift from the young people of St. John's congregation at Fort Wayne, Indiana". This one hundred dollars consisted of money collected at the evening English services.

In October, 1902, the congregation ordered a celebration commemorating the church's fiftieth anniversary. The church was newly decorated and a Golden Anniversary Booklet was published. There are many of these books in the possession of the older members; this booklet was used extensively in the writing of the first fifty years of this history.

## 1903

The Golden Anniversary was celebrated on October 2, 1903.

## 1903-1909

The church minutes for the major portion of this decade are missing.



FOURTH PARSONAGE

During this period Teachers C. F. Knauer and William Wiggert were called by the congregation to teach in the Christian Day School.

A new parsonage was built on the northeast corner of Washington and Van Buren.

On December 5, 1909, St. John of Lake Township dedicated a new church. The Mother Church in Fort Wayne was invited to attend the festivities.

### 1910

St. John's congregation arranged an excursion on the L. E. and W. Railroad so that members could attend the dedication of the Children's Home at Richmond, Indiana. The train left Fort Wayne at 6 A.M. and returned at 7 P.M. The fare was \$1.25 per person.

### 1911

Teacher Adolph Oelke received a second call from Salem Lutheran Church of Detroit, Michigan. Since his mother lived in Detroit, Teacher Oelke wished to accept, but Pastor Dannecker and the congregation felt that he was needed here. After much deliberation, the matter was finally resolved when Teacher Oelke decided to stay in Fort Wayne, and then all teachers received an increase of \$100.00 per year.

Also, in November, 1911, Pastor Dannecker received a call from Woodville, Ohio. Two professors were at the congregational meeting to plead for his services, but the congregation asked Pastor Dannecker to stay.

### 1913

The Luther Society was given permission to add to the back part of the school building so that two bowling alleys could be installed.

During 1913 the steeple was repaired for \$207.00; the small cupola was taken off; a new roof, slate on slater's felt, was put on the church for \$1265.00; the foundation was rock-faced for \$171.80; the church was painted and brick repointed for \$640.00; the interior was frescoed for \$500.00; shields were put over radiators for \$50.00; new windows were installed for \$700.00; rubber mats were purchased for \$125.00; carpenter work was done costing \$400.00; wiring and lights costing \$748.85 were installed; and \$1940.00 was spent for new pews furnished by a Richmond, Indiana, company. The old pews were given to mission churches in New Leipzig and Elgin, North Dakota. Total cost of the improvements amounted to \$8186.58.

The congregation donated \$239.00 for flood relief during this year.

On September 28, 1913, the church was rededicated.

The road in the cemetery was tiled, curbed, and paved; new entrance posts and gates were also installed. Total cost was \$2378.02.

## 1914

Pastor Dannecker finished the new constitution in German and English. The congregation ratified it after minor changes and ordered 500 copies printed.

## 1915

New plumbing and a new sink were installed in the school kitchen at a cost of \$517.00.

## 1916

The envelope system for collection of church dues was inaugurated.

## 1918

Prices on a central heating system for the school and church were secured. Bids of \$6550.00 by contractor Arnold and \$7800.00 by contractor Rolf were received, but it was finally decided to repair the old boilers.

The water motor for the organ froze and broke resulting in the congregation ordering the trustees to power the organ with an electric motor.

The Ohio Synod held its convention at St. John in 1918.

The year 1918 also marked the first English confirmation of children.

## 1920

The three ladies' societies furnished new paraments for the pulpit and altar at a cost of \$300.00.

The iron fence around the church and school property was taken down. Also permission was given to drive a new well in the cemetery.

Prof. O. A. Trapp was hired as teacher.

The Men's Society was founded.

## 1921

Lights were installed under the balconies.

Collections of clothing, money, and even cows were sent to the suffering in Germany following the war.

## 1922

Since a third teacher was not available, the congregation and Emmanuel agreed to merge their schools employing a division of grades. Grades 1, 2, 5, and 6 were taught at St. John and 3, 4, 7, and 8 at Emmanuel.

## 1923

A drive was conducted to pay off debts of \$18,681.25. Subscriptions totaling \$22,514.00 were secured.

The furnace in the church was rebuilt and overhauled for \$2238.00.

Pastor Dannecker was granted a leave of absence due to illness. Regular services were held, thanks to assistance from pastors of sister congregations.

On October 17, Pastor Dannecker presented his resignation effective January 1, 1924. He had been elected president of the Northern District of the Evangelical Lutheran Joint Synod of Ohio and other states.

The congregation released Pastor Dannecker and immediately sent a call to Pastor Richter of Detroit, Michigan. The call was returned. Calls were sent to Pastors Stellhorn, Tank, and E. J. Boerger, the latter accepting the pastorate.

Since the Missouri Synod indicated they did not approve of the co-operation between Emmanuel and St. John in operation of a Christian Day School, the congregation through recommendation of the vestry sent a letter to Emmanuel Church offering to terminate the joint school arrangement if they so desired. A reply from Emmanuel by letter followed resulting in termination of school contracts between the congregations.



PASTOR BOERGER

## 1924

Pastor Boerger was installed May 11, 1924. A reception welcoming Pastor Boerger and his family was held in the school auditorium.

The congregation adopted a budget and the duplex envelope system.

Teacher Allwardt was called as a third teacher.

The first budget:

Congregation .....	\$8545.00
Trustees .....	2700.00
Benevolence .....	6300.00

## 1925

The trustee treasury was abolished since the budget system was inaugurated.

## 1926

The Men's Society was granted permission to take down the hitching rail along Van Buren Street.

The congregation contributed \$1000.00 to the building fund drive for the Lutheran Hospital.

A committee was appointed to assist Grace Lutheran Church in their drive for funds among our members.

## 1927

A committee was appointed to make preparations for the 75th anniversary celebration.

April 24, 1927, Grace Lutheran Church invited St. John's congregation to the dedicatory services of their new church. St. John held no services that day.

Rest rooms were installed in the school hall, and the outside toilet building was removed.

A total of \$31,753.00 was subscribed by 733 members and the societies for the 75th year celebration.

The alley was paved at a cost of \$3066.00.

Teacher F. Wiechert came to replace Teacher Allwardt.

## 1928

At this time the church was torn up and the services were being held in the school hall. The chimney on the school fell into the auditorium due to a high wind storm. The congregation was without a meeting place until Pastor Moll of Emanuel offered their church for services. The offer was accepted for one Lenten service held on a Thursday night.

In commemoration of the 75th Anniversary of the church the entire structure was remodeled and enlarged. A new addition extending 25 ft. towards the south was added. At the same time a new four manual direct electric action organ was installed. The entire project cost approximately \$55,000.00. It was dedicated August 4, 1929.

The Finance Board was set up and added to the Constitution.

Pastor Dannecker who was living at Oak Harbor, Ohio, passed away and was buried in St. John Lutheran Cemetery. Resolutions of condolence were sent to the family, and the doors of the church and school were draped in black.

### **1930**

The first lay member was elected as chairman of the congregation. Heretofore the pastor had served as chairman at congregational meetings.

Families of Teachers William Wiggert and Jacob Stumpf were sent resolutions of condolence following their deaths.

The Mission Society started the nursery in the school during English services.

Resolutions of condolence were read at the funeral of John Immel, Sr., who served the congregation faithfully for many years, and also were sent to the bereaved.

### **1931**

A resolution of thanks was given to Charles Kienzle, retiring treasurer.

### **1932**

The publishing of the Anzeiger, a church publication, was discontinued and the weekly bulletin inaugurated.

### **1933**

The insurance premiums on policies held by the church were so arranged that an equal sum was payable each year.

The pastor's father, Mr. John K. Boerger, died at Marysville, Ohio, so a resolution of condolence was sent to the family.

### **1934**

The Chicago Conference of the Illinois District was held in Fort Wayne at St. John.

### **1935**

The vestry minutes were ordered to be written in English as well as German.

Teacher Knauer asked to be relieved of his duties as his eyes were failing him. The congregation granted him a leave of absence, and Miss Margaret Spiegel was hired temporarily to serve in his stead.

### 1936

Miss Spiegel left and Miss Sophia Krause was hired as teacher.

At this time Prof. Knauer was released as teacher, and a resolution of appreciation was sent to him and was recorded in the minutes of the School Board and of the congregation. Prof. Knauer was also granted a \$25.00 a month pension.

### 1937

The school rooms and hall were redecorated at a cost of \$720.00.

### 1938

Miss Krause asked for a release as teacher because she was needed at home.

Miss Dorothy Schirm was engaged to teach.

### 1939

A dumb waiter was installed in the school at a cost of \$361.00.

### 1940

The minutes of the congregation and vestry from January 8 on were recorded in English only.

The amplifying system in the church was installed for \$300.00.

Family participation in Holy Communion was inaugurated.

### 1941

The glass enclosure was installed under the balcony, and S. H. Schanbacher and Son redecorated the church for \$2350.00.

Two frame houses belonging to the church, one on Van Buren Street and one on Washington Blvd., were torn down.

The present American Lutheran Church hymnal was adopted.

### 1942

The assets of the congregation were set at \$126,839.22 not including the cemetery.

All old hymnals were given to Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church.

Prof. Weichert resigned because of illness and was granted a \$35.00 a month pension.

Prof. Adolph Oelke retired from his school duties. He was to be paid \$600.00 a year for his services as congregational and cemetery board secretary.

Prof. A. O. Moensch and Miss E. Nuetzel were hired as teachers and with Miss Schirm completed the teaching staff.

The Honor Roll for service men was put up in the church.

A resolution committee consisting of Rev. Boerger, Arthur Bussing, Walter Vetter, and George Schoenherr was appointed on June 22 to prepare suitable recognition for the services of Teachers Wiechert and Oelke.

### 1943

Miss Schirm left her teaching position at St. John and C. Trzynka was engaged.

### 1944

Miss Greim was secured as teacher to replace C. Trzynka. Miss Greim left in March and for the rest of the year the school operated with two teachers.

Miss Nuetzel left and Prof. A. Moench, Grace Doermann, and Olga Hvizdak served as teachers.

The Endowment Fund Board was organized.

### 1945

St. John engaged its first interne, George Reinke.

Miss Olga Hvizdak left and Miss Eunice Loots took her place as teacher.

### 1946

Employment of a financial secretary was ordered at a salary of \$80.00 per month. Alfred Oelschlaeger, second interne, came to serve.

Not being able to secure teachers, the congregation made an agreement with Emmanuel whereby our pupils were to attend Emmanuel's school for one year.

\$10,229.00 was pledged on a drive to liquidate a \$14,000.00 debt of several years standing.

The Mission Society celebrated its 50th anniversary.

The school auditorium ceiling was insulated at a cost of \$495.00.

Pastor Boerger accepted a call to Ixonia, Wisconsin.

### 1947

Class rooms were redecorated for the re-opening of the school.

The School Board held a reception for three new teachers, Mr. Norman Jacobs, Miss Green, and Miss Rengert.

Interne Alvin Stein came to serve during the summer vacation, Interne Oelschlaeger having left in May.

Pastor William Streng arrived on May 18, 1947, at which time a reception was given in his honor.

In September a church secretary was engaged to work 20 hours per week.

A school bus was purchased for \$700.00 from Mr. Thiele, a member of St. Mark Lutheran Church at Yoder.

## 1948

The parsonage on Washington at Van Buren was sold for \$25,000.00 and the present manse located at 1806 California Ave. was purchased at a cost of \$26,250.00.

Interne Stein was again asked to serve the congregation during the summer months.

The constitution was changed so that all communicant members over 18 years of age became voting members and were permitted to hold office except that of trustee.



PASTOR STRENG

Mr. Verton Eby was hired to play the organ, serve as church secretary, and direct the choir.

### 1949

Mr. Eby was hired to teach in the school and to continue his work as organist and choir director. Interne Stein was secured to assist during the Easter season.

John Seim came as the fourth interne.

### 1950

A drive for funds for the Centennial program was begun.

Mr. Norman Jacobs resigned as principal of the school and was replaced by Mr. Eby as principal. Miss Green and Miss Marion Sanborn were hired as teachers.

Creatis Shira came to serve as our fifth interne.

Bethany Mission, on the Engle Road in Indian Village, was founded by St. John Church. In order to give this Mission a good start, St. John donated approximately two acres of land on the northeast corner of its cemetery property. In addition, an outright gift of \$4,000.00 from the General Treasury was made; \$19,000.00 was loaned from the Endowment Fund, and a loan of \$20,000.00 from a local bank was negotiated.



MANSE

## 1951

Harold Goers came to serve as our sixth interne.

Pastor Streng received a third call to Wartburg Seminary, and, feeling that he should accept, asked for a release which the congregation granted.

A farewell party for Pastor Streng and his family was held August 26.

A pulpit committee was appointed to secure a new pastor.

Teachers engaged for the year were Mr. and Mrs. Norman Jacobs and Miss Burthelle Schroeder.

## 1952

The services of Interne Goers were loaned to Bethany Mission until a pastor was secured. The Mission was formally organized as a congregation on June 26, 1952.

Pastor F. E. Schoenbohm, of Clinton, Iowa, accepted a call extended to him and was installed on January 6, 1952. A reception in his honor was held that afternoon in the school hall.

Thomas Herbon came as our seventh interne.

The side balconies were removed, crosses gilded, and the woodwork was painted on the exterior of the church.

A new roof was installed over the entire church except on the south side.

## 1953

Radiators in the church were removed and replaced with baseboard heating; a hot air system for heating the chancel was installed; all new chancel furniture was secured including a new altar; the entire chancel, choir loft, and aisles were carpeted; the entire interior of the church was redecorated; new lighting fixtures installed, and a stairway was built leading from the west side of the sacristy to the basement.

During the time of the renovation and alterations many members of the congregation gave much of their time to help clean and recondition the interior of the church.

Rodney Josephson of Detroit, Michigan, assumed his work as the 8th interne on August 1st.

The cost of the first phase of our Centennial program was \$35,286.66. Plans for additional improvements to the church property have already been inaugurated. These include the enlargement of the church basement, centralized heating, and repointing the school. Funds for these renovations were pledged in a drive during September.

The Centennial Committee responsible for the entire renovation program consisted of the following members:

CENTENNIAL COMMITTEE

Walter Vetter—Chairman	Carl Messerschmidt
George Schoenherr—Secretary	Rufus Neff
Hugh Fryback—Treasurer	James Oman
George Beck—Trustee	Elmer Rodewald
Carl Einsiedel—Trustee	Russell Shafer
Fred Kanning—Trustee	Fred Willrath
Richard Helmke	Charles Kienzle (Deceased)
Raymond Kierspe	Rev. F. E. Schoenbohm

*The following have served on this committee some time during the last 5 years.*

Interne Creatis Shira	Simon Eggers
Interne Harold Goers	Walter Springer
Interne Thomas Herbon	William Burger
Phil Korn	Harold Brudi
Arthur Bussing	Pastor Wm. Streng
Martin Mundt	

At the present time St. John has a membership of 1340 baptized and 1049 confirmed. There are 10 active organizations in the church.



CHURCH INTERIOR

## ST. JOHN LUTHERAN SUNDAY SCHOOL

Although the congregation had always maintained a Christian Day School there came the time when it was felt necessary to add another educational agency, the Sunday School.

In 1915 Pastor H. P. Dannecker called a meeting of the following people: Charles Steiss, Charles Kienzle, Emil Holterman, Miss Helen Steiss, and Teacher Wm. Wiggert who organized an English Sunday School. Teacher Wm. Wiggert, Helen Steiss, and Mr. Emil Holterman taught Junior, Intermediate, and Senior Departments, with 35 pupils. Pastor Dannecker had charge of the Christenlehre.

In 1918 The Christenlehre was consolidated with the English Sunday School—carried on with eight to ten teachers and 180 to 200 pupils. Rev. Dannecker taught the Bible Class in the church auditorium. Mr. Emil Holterman was appointed Supervisor, and Teacher Adolph Oelke, Superintendent.

Teachers who had taught in the German language were now given instructions to teach in the English language—classes were held each week for one hour. All money taken in by the Sunday School was placed in the alms treasury of the church, and all bills of the Sunday School were paid by the church.

The Sunday School was conducted in about the same way until the year 1945, when a new constitution was written by Rev. E. J. Boerger, Interne George Reinke, and the General Church Board. A Sunday School Board was formed consisting of three members—two were elected by the congregation and one appointed by the General Church Board along with the Superintendent and Asst. Superintendent. Elmer Rodewald was appointed Supt. and Ralph Reitz Asst. Supt., and the Sunday School was made self supporting. In 1949 Forrest Jewell was appointed Superintendent and Elmer Rodewald Assistant, and in 1952 George Hemmeter took over the superintendency with Forrest Jewell as assistant.

The Sunday School sponsors the Vacation Bible School and the "Booster", a monthly youth bulletin. It has made contributions to the orphanages of the American Lutheran Church, Sunday School Mission Fund of the Illinois District, India and New Guinea Mission work, Bethany Mission, and St. John Radio Fund. Over \$1,000.00 has been given to the St. John's Centennial Program.

## ORGANIZATIONS OF THE CHURCH

In the Jubilee Booklet of 1903 Pastor H. P. Dannecker devotes about twenty pages to the organizations of the congregation. The oldest group is the Sewing Society, formally organized in 1881. First officers were Mrs. Rosine Hohnhaus, President; Mrs. Marie Laepple, Secretary; and Mrs. Wilhelmine Hoffmeister, Treasurer. Pastor Dannecker wrote a lengthy poem entitled "Das Lied vom Naehkorb" (The Sewing Basket Song) and dedicated it to the Sewing Circle on its 20th birthday. This group is still active with thread and needle each Thursday, however, since 1949 as a unit of the Ladies' Aid.

The Ladies Aid history goes back to the year 1893 when this group was formally organized. It appears from the first minutes that such an organization had existed even before this date, only to have become inactive. In 1903 it was reported that there were over 200 members. Mrs. Wilhelmine Schwake was the first president. Present officers are: Mrs. Richard Steinke, President; Mrs. George Spittler, Vice-President; Mrs. Jonathan Sprunger, Secretary; and Mrs. Arnold Bremer, Treasurer. The Ladies Aid has continued to support the work of the church. Today it sponsors the Altar Guild, the Quilting and Sewing Group, and maintains a mission student in India.

In the year 1897 a second women's group was formed. It was known as a Mission Society. It had 41 members and the first president was Mrs. Maria Lenz. Today we have two Mission Societies. The older and larger group meets on Wednesday afternoons and the Mary-Martha on Tuesday evenings. Mrs. Esther Rousseau and Mrs. Forrest Jewell head these two organizations at present.

The Adult Society which numbers 150 members, both married and single, was brought into being on October 20, 1938, with 21 charter members. This society replaced the Men's Society which had become idle.

It was on January 4, 1898, that the Lutherverein, or Luther League was organized. It took the place of the "Tabea" Society for young ladies which had been disbanded just previously. Soon after 1930 this youth group was divided into senior and junior divisions. It has continued in this arrangement to the present. Heinz Vogt is now at the head of the Senior League and Janice Hillyer of the Young People's Luther League.

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After a visit to the Ohio District Brotherhood Convention in 1948, enthusiasm among the men who attended ran so high that a Brotherhood was formed at St. John in the late fall of that same year. In 1949 it affiliated with Illinois District. Elmer Rodewald was the first president. Hugh Fryback is at the helm at the present time. The membership is 56.

The Junior Mission Band was organized by the Mary-Martha Mission Society in January, 1951. The aim of this group is to instill mission interest in the growing

children of the church. Meetings are held on the second Saturday morning of each month with Mrs. Heinz Vogt as leader.

The newest Society to be formed is the Younger Married Couples Club, which was organized in the Fall of 1952. This group has been meeting monthly for devotion, study, and fellowship. James Winkelblech is executive secretary.

Musical organizations have always played a prominent part in the history of the congregation. In the fiftieth anniversary booklet a choir, quartette, orchestra, and band are mentioned. At the Golden Jubilee observance in 1903 the festival Choir sang Mozart's "12th Mass", Haydn's "The Heaven's Declare" and "Farmer's Mass", the last number with orchestral accompaniment. Today we have two choirs, senior and junior, smaller groups being selected from these for special assignments. St. John has had some excellent choir directors and organists. Mrs. Charles Bishop ably fills these positions at the present time.

The Sick Benefit Society, organized in 1909, is in the process of disbandment at the present time because a declining membership has made it impossible to function properly.

The Parent-Teacher Association was begun in 1940. It consists of the parents, teachers, and friends of the Christian Day School who meet once a month to further the cause of Christian education in the congregation. Mrs. Donald Weber is now serving as president.

The church also has taken a keen interest in scouting. At present time we have Boy Scout, Girl Scout, and Cub Scout Troops.

## MEMBERS OF ST. JOHN in full-time church service

Louis Jacobs	Pastor
Carl Beck	Teacher
August Korn	Teacher
George Bittler	Teacher
Theodore Dannecker	Pastor
Walter Wiggert	Pastor
Hans Knauer	Pastor
Donald Vetter	Teacher
Edward Rice	Pastor
William Weiss	Missionary
Carl Hohnhaus	Teacher
Robert Rodewald	Student of Theology

*We also wish to acknowledge the work of the following  
two committees.*

### CENTENNIAL PROGRAM COMMITTEE

Robert Neeb	Mrs. Aug. Eisenacher
Christ Spiegel	Miss Helen Rodewald
Mrs. Ruth Messerschmidt	Oswald Brudi
Miss Jean Kern	Clarence Settle
Eugene Lenz	Mrs. Audrey Hoelle
Charles Kensill	Miss Clara Klomp
Mrs. Carl Suter	Gerald Foreman
Ralph Reitz	Arthur Bussing

Rev. F. E. Schoenbohm.

### CENTENNIAL BOOKLET COMMITTEE

Ralph Reitz	Marvey Knigge
Gerald Foreman	Carl Einsiedel
George Beck	Mrs. Dorothy Blackburn
Interne Rodney Josephson	
Rev. F. E. Schoenbohm	

## CHURCH COUNCIL—CENTENNIAL YEAR

*Pastor*—F. E. Schoenbohm

*Interne*—Rodney Josephson

### CONGREGATIONAL OFFICERS

Charles Florent, Chairman  
Gerald Foreman, Vice-Chairman  
James Winkleblech, Secretary  
Ralph Redding, Treasurer  
Arthur G. Meyer,  
Financial Secretary

### VESTRY

Fred Kanning, Trustee  
Carl Einsiedel, Trustee  
George Beck, Trustee  
Herbert Messerschmidt, Elder  
Sherman Noll, Elder  
William Irwin, Elder  
James Hoelle, Elder  
Paul Harmeyer, Deacon  
Richard Helmke, Deacon  
Robert Neeb, Deacon  
Earl Lenz, Deacon,

FINANCE BOARD	O. H. Marschner
Marvey Knigge	Theodore Hillyer
Paul Kable	Christ Schoeneman, Superintendent
Harold Lassen	
Albert Messerschmidt	NOMINATING COMMITTEE
Clarence Braun	Walter Vetter
C. Glen Behmer	George Spittler
Treasurer—Cemetery Board	Carl Messerschmidt
Treasurer—Alms	
Treasurer—Endowment Fund	USHERS
Treasurer—Congregational	Eugene Lenz
Arthur Meyer, Financial Secretary	Louis Culmann
August Fortmeyer, Chairman of District Visitors	Charles Kensill
Trustees	Donald Hensch
SCHOOL BOARD	Ronald Mommer
Fred Beck	Lawrence Wardlaw
William Cripe	Robert Grueb
Claude Huston	Robert Braun
Glen Aubrey	James Young
Earl Sanner	James Oman
Hugh Fryback	Donald Studler
Mrs. Emil Zimmerman	James Blackburn
VERGER	Paul Allen
August Fortmeyer	Herbert Thiele
SUNDAY SCHOOL BOARD	Carl Messerschmidt
Harold Hohman	
Miss Lyle Rupert	TEACHERS
Forrest Jewell	Burthelle Schroeder, Principal
George Hemmeter, Superintendent	Esther Timm
Mrs. Herman Esper, Treasurer	Grace Sievert
ENDOWMENT FUND BOARD	Mrs. Doris Thiebold
George Schoenherr	
Heinz Vogt	MUSIC COMMITTEE
Arthur Bussing, Chairman	Oscar Rodewald
CEMETERY BOARD	Mrs. Theo. Hillyer
August Juergens	S. S. Egger
Oscar Rodewald	
Elmer Feistkorn	LEGAL ADVISOR
August Eisenacher	William L. Burger
Emil Steinke	
Richard Steinke	DISTRICT KEYMEN
	August Fortmeyer, Chairman
	Walter Wiseley
	George Beck
	William Erwin
	Robert Neeb
	James Botz
	George Spittler
	Ralph Motz

*Vorfaßung  
der  
Deutsch Evangelisch Lutherschen  
St. Johannis Gemeinde  
in  
Fort Wayne, Indiana.*

*Organisationsurkunde der Gründung der Gemeinde am  
2. Oktober 1853.*

*Mit Veränderungen und Zusätzungen  
am 17. September 1871*

Constitution of the German Evangelical Lutheran St. John Congregation,  
in Fort Wayne, Indiana. Adopted at the time of the founding of the  
congregation October 2, 1853. With changes and additions unani-  
mously accepted September 17, 1871.

American Lutheran Church  
OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT  
87 EAST MAIN ST  
COLUMBUS, OHIO

JANUARY 6, 1953

Rev. F. E. Schoenbohm  
729 W., Washington Blvd  
Ft. Wayne 3, Indiana

Dear Brother Schoenbohm:

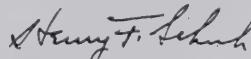
The American Lutheran Church rejoices with St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church on the celebration of its centennial. St. John's has received many blessings from Almighty God in the past one hundred years and it as a congregation in turn has been a blessing to the community and to the Church at large. There is much reason for joy and thanksgiving on this happy occasion.

May God continue to bless pastor and congregation and may the pastor and congregation again in turn continue to be a great blessing as in the past one hundred years.

The American Lutheran Church prays that God may richly bless your celebration.

With kindest greetings to you, I am

Sincerely yours,



President

HFS:er

*Greetings from the President  
of the American Lutheran Church*

STATE - INDIANA

GEORGE N. CRAIG  
GOVERNOR



INDIANAPOLIS 4

To the Members of St. John's Ev. Lutheran Church:

GREETINGS:

It is a great honor and pleasure to extend my own personal greetings and those of the people of the State of Indiana on the occasion of the Centennial Celebration of the St. John's Ev. Lutheran Church.

The history of the growth of your church and school is an inspiration to us all in these troubled times and the spiritual leadership that you have given to your community stands as a bulwark against any evil forces that may threaten us. May you continue to grow and prosper.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "George N. Craig" above "Governor of Indiana".

*Greetings from the Governor  
of the State of Indiana*



HARRY W. BAALS  
MAYOR

TO THE CONGREGATION AND FRIENDS OF ST. JOHN'S EVANGELICAL  
LUTHERAN CHURCH

GREETINGS:

I deem it a very high honor to have been invited to contribute a congratulatory statement on the observance of the Centennial Anniversary of St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church.

I know that when I congratulate and felicitate St. John's Church, as Mayor of Fort Wayne, I am bespeaking the thoughts of many worth-while citizens of standing in Fort Wayne.

The constant stream of worthy leaders and their worthy followers whose hopes - and whose dreams - and whose labors over a full century of time account for the celebration of this Anniversary, must look down with a great measure of pride in their achievements.

To those fine, good people, whose names will remain immortal in the history of St. John's Church, we pay our respect -- not a compulsory respect, but a loving respect born of appreciation of what they contributed so gloriously, not merely to humanity, but to God.

The value of the work performed by St. John's Church is not measurable by any yardstick that man is able to use. We can only bow in awed reverence before such a shrine of glorious accomplishment.

Again let me say to those intimately connected with this great Institution, that Fort Wayne congratulates you on the One Hundred Years of achievement of the Church and earnestly prays that the Church's achievements during the next one hundred years will be even more glorious.

Sincerely,

*Harry W. Baals*  
M A Y O R

*Greetings from the  
Mayor of Fort Wayne, Indiana*

# Centennial Program



SUNDAY, OCTOBER 4

DIVINE WORSHIP SERVICE

10:15 A.M.

Sermon—"Reflect and Pray"

Philippians 1:3-6 and 9-11

Rev. A. W. Engelbrecht, President  
Ill. District A.I.C., Mendota, Ill.

P. T. A. TEA

3:00 P.M.

School Hall

YOUTH SERVICE

7:30 P.M.

Sermon—"Youth Magnifies the Lord"

Psalm 34:3

Dr. Marcus C. Rieke, D.D.  
Youth Director, A.I.C.  
Columbus, Ohio

## SUNDAY, OCTOBER 11

### GERMAN COMMUNION SERVICE

8:00 A.M.

Sermon—"Verwandte des Herrn"

Matthew 12:46-50

Rev. F. E. Schoenbohm, *Pastor*

### ENGLISH COMMUNION SERVICE

10:15 A.M.

Sermon—"A Christian Congregation's Centennial New Song unto the Lord"

Psalm 98:1

Rev. Theo. Dannecker, Maybee, Mich.

### ALTAR GUILD TEA

3:00 P.M.

### CHOIR CONCERT

7:30 P.M.

## SUNDAY, OCTOBER 18

### MISSION FESTIVAL SERVICE

10:15 A.M.

Sermon—"History is His Story"

Romans 11:36

Prof. Wm. D. Streng, Wartburg Seminary, Dubuque, Ia.

### THANKOFFERING SERVICE

7:30 P.M.

Mission Society, Mary-Martha, Junior Mission Band

Sermonette—"A Thankoffering Service"

I Kings 8:65-66

Rev. Creatis Shira

Liturgist—Rev. F. H. Holtmeyer

## SUNDAY, OCTOBER 25

### REFORMATION AND COMMUNION SERVICE

10:15 A.M.

Sermon—"What is a Lutheran?"

I Peter 3:15

Rev. F. E. Schoenbohm, *Pastor*

### REVIEWING THE PAST—PAGEANT AND PICTURES

7:30 P.M.

Ladies' Aid and Brotherhood

## SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 1

### HOMECOMING AND MEMORIAL SERVICE

10:15 A.M.

Sermon—"The Changeless Claims of Christ"

I Corinthians 6:19-20

Rev. E. J. Boerger, Ixonia, Wis.

### FELLOWSHIP DINNER

12:00 Noon











